

12 (new).

A method of manufacturing an integrated circuit, the method comprising

the steps of:

- B¹
- (a) forming features on a substrate, the features protruding from the substrate to create creases adjacent the features;
 - (b) depositing a layer of non-dielectric material over the features and the creases;
 - (c) removing a portion of the layer of non-dielectric material, leaving stringers of the non-dielectric material in the creases; and
 - (d) converting the stringers of non-dielectric material in the creases into a dielectric material.

13 (new). The method, as set forth in claim 12, wherein step (a) comprises the step of forming gate electrodes protruding from the substrate.

14 (new). The method, as set forth in claim 12, wherein step (b) comprises the step of depositing a layer of silicon over the features and the creases.

15 (new). The method, as set forth in claim 12, wherein step (c) comprises the step of etching the portion of the layer of non-dielectric material.

16 (new). The method, as set forth in claim 12, wherein step (d) comprises the step of oxidizing the stringers.

17 (new). The method, as set forth in claim 12, wherein step (d) comprises the step of nitridizing the stringers.

18 (new). A method of manufacturing an integrated circuit, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) forming features on a substrate, the features protruding from the substrate to create creases adjacent the features;
- (b) depositing a layer of non-dielectric material over the features and the creases;
- (c) removing a portion of the non-dielectric material from the creases using a given method, the given method leaving residual non-dielectric material in some of the creases; and
- (d) converting the residual non-dielectric material in the creases into a dielectric material.

19 (new). The method, as set forth in claim 18, wherein step (a) comprises the step of forming gate electrodes protruding from the substrate.

20 (new). The method, as set forth in claim 18, wherein step (b) comprises the step of depositing a layer of silicon over the features and the creases.

21 (new). The method, as set forth in claim 18, wherein the given method comprises an etching method.

22 (new). The method, as set forth in claim 18, wherein step (d) comprises the step of oxidizing the residual non-dielectric material.

23 (new). The method, as set forth in claim 18, wherein step (d) comprises the step of nitridizing the residual non-dielectric material.

REMARKS

Claims 2-11 have been canceled without prejudice, and new claims 12-23 have been added. Consideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.